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## **VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PROMOTES NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY**

(RICHMOND, Va.)—The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) encourages individuals to be tested for HIV on June 27, National HIV Testing Day. AIDS service organizations, community-based organizations and local health departments across the Commonwealth will sponsor special testing events and educational programs as part of this year's activities. Free and confidential HIV test sites are available throughout the state with anonymous, oral and rapid testing available in some localities.

"This year marks the 25th anniversary of the first AIDS diagnosis in the United States," said State Health Commissioner Robert B. Stroube, M.D., M.P.H. "Since then, we've seen advances in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Much work still needs to be done. Let's recognize National HIV Testing Day as a day for increased awareness of an epidemic we continue to face."

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one million people are living with HIV/AIDS in the United States, and an estimated 40,000 new HIV infections are expected to occur this year. As of mid-2005, VDH estimates that 27,800 Virginians are infected and living with HIV. Approximately 6,000 to 8,000 of those individuals may not know they are infected.

"HIV testing is essential to the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS," said Casey W. Riley, director of VDH's Division of Disease Prevention. "The only way to know whether you're infected with HIV is to be tested. Learn your status and take control of your health."

The Division of Disease Prevention provides HIV and STD education and prevention throughout the state. Its hotline provides confidential counseling and referral services. The division supports HIV/STD testing and partner counseling, and provides medications for the treatment of Virginians living with HIV/AIDS. Services are free and confidential.

For more information about HIV/AIDS, testing sites and other sexually transmitted diseases, call the Division of Disease Prevention's Hotline at (800) 533-4148 or visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/std](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/std). The Web site also lists National HIV Testing Day activities statewide. Events are subject to change.

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